

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

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FDR Ditches New Deal in Congress

Roosevelt Abandons Federal Housing In Order To Aid Private Building; Program Threatens Wage Levels Of Building Workers

Rapidly discarding the most cherished features of the New Deal in an effort to conciliate hostile big-business interests and get their "cooperation" in meeting the new depression, President Roosevelt last week placed before Congress a message on housing along the most orthodox Hooverian lines as well as proposal to cut appropriations for road building and other internal improvements in an effort to balance the budget.

The housing message carefully eliminates any suggestion of a federal housing program based on increased "spending"; on the contrary, it places the greatest emphasis on aiding private business and encouraging it to engage in housing-construction activity by backing such enterprises with a government guarantee, by helping reduce financing costs and the like. The message also suggests that wage rates in the building trades be slashed as an "encouragement" to private construction and offers the workers the vague promise of a higher annual wage should there be a boom in the building industry.

The Presidential housing program immediately met with almost unanimous applause in the reactionary press, which gleefully pointed out how closely it followed the well-known Coolidge-Hoover pattern. But it aroused sharp criticism in labor and liberal circles. A few days before, John L. Lewis, in a newspaper interview, had

Detroit Section Of LNPL Set Up

Detroit, Mich.

Labor's Non-Partisan League secured a new affiliate last Sunday when two hundred delegates, representing seventy-odd local unions, mainly of auto workers and other C.I.O. unions but also including a few A. F. of L. locals, organized a Wayne County branch.

The conference adopted a political declaration and resolutions on structure and finances. The latter two caused little discussion except for the provision that, for the time being, no individual membership organizations be set up, the League confining itself to trade unions only. The latter proposal, as well as the section of the main resolution providing for preparations for a state labor party based upon the trade unions, precipitated a heated discussion during which the supporters of the "unity" caucus in the United Automobile Workers Union split wide open. Communist Party supporters resisted the organization of a distinct labor party and proposed the inclusion of middle-class groups, while leading socialists and other "unity" caucus members lined up with the progressives in the U.A.W. to score Republican and Democratic anti-labor policies. Carried was the proposal for a party of labor based upon the trade unions and guided by a labor platform.

The division affected even the
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IN MR. HOOVER'S FOOTSTEPS

It does seem as if, in dealing with the business recession, President Roosevelt is growing more like Mr. Hoover every day . . . Mr. Roosevelt's housing message might well have come from the hand of Mr. Hoover himself. . . . He offers the old reliable Hoover-Coolidge formula—stand behind business and help it go ahead with the job. . . . And he wants to balance the budget. That is becoming an obsession with him, as it was with Mr. Hoover in the early '30s. . . . Thus, as you look at Washington now, you see Mr. Roosevelt playing the role created in 1929 by Mr. Hoover. The only difference is that Mr. Roosevelt plays it with a little more verve. The lines are the same, only brightened up with the Roosevelt personality." — Raymond Clapper, in the New York World-Telegram, November 30, 1937.

AFL-CIO Talks End in Deadlock

Executive Council Refuses To Grant Free Entry To All C.I.O. Unions; Lewis Declares Status-Quo Prevails; Committee To Meet Dec. 21

A complete deadlock was the net result of the three conferences held last week at Washington between John L. Lewis and Philip Murray for the C.I.O. and Wm. Green and George M. Harrison for the A. F. of L., for the purpose of discussing the possibilities of re-unifying the labor movement. This small committee of four, including the heads of the two labor organizations, was set up after it had become clear that the larger committee of thirteen, ten C.I.O. and three A. F. of L., could not get anywhere, especially since, as far as the Federation was concerned, it seemed to lack the full and proper authority.

The issue upon which the Lewis-Green conversations appear to have foundered was the same as had been in the forefront all along. The

A. F. of L. spokesmen declared themselves ready to accept industrial unionism in a limited number of fields—but even this they refused to put in writing. As for the other C.I.O. unions, the Federation representatives would make no commitments except to suggest that special conferences be held to "adjust" each situation separately. As a preliminary condition, they demanded the dissolution of the C.I.O. Fully realizing that the A. F. of L. plan would lead to the disruption of the industrial-union movement, the C.I.O. spokesmen, on their part, demanded the free entry of all their affiliated unions into the A. F. of L., as well as the establishment of an autonomous industrial-union department within the Federation. Mr. Lewis emphatically declared that he would not "betray" any of the unions in the C.I.O. or accept a "peace which means death."

A special session of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. had been summoned for the middle of last week for the official purpose of considering wage-hour legislation. The meeting, however, naturally discussed the "peace" negotiations as well. Certain elements of the council seem to have adopted a somewhat conciliatory position but the big craft-union chiefs who dominate the Federation leadership apparently would not yield an inch upon any consideration. Inevitably, therefore, the discussions came up against a blank wall when the small committee reconvened. Commenting on the outcome, Mr. Lewis declared that, in the failure to reach any agreement, the situation had returned to the status-quo—that is, a struggle for survival between the two labor federations, in which the C.I.O. has the great advantage of its modern organizational strategy and industrial structure.

A report of the futile negotiations in the committee of four will be made to the larger committee on December 21. Whether discussions will continue thereafter, is problematical.

Responsibility for the virtual breakdown of the "peace" negotiations must be attributed directly to the uncompromisingly reactionary attitude of the craft-union leaders who hold the Federation in their grip. Placing their narrow jurisdictional vested interests above the interests of labor as a whole, they have hitherto stubbornly rejected the only sound basis for unity—a free and unhampered field for industrial unionism in the great mass-production and allied industries.

FORM INDUSTRIAL UNION COUNCIL IN PITTSBURGH

The Steel City Industrial Union Council of the C.I.O. was formed at a conference at Pittsburgh attended by some 350 delegates from 32 national unions affiliated to the Committee for Industrial Organization. The new council represents a total local membership of 150,000.

STALINIST DOUBLE-DEALING IS EXPOSED IN AUTO UNION

By FREDERICK J. ARNOLD

Detroit, Mich.

PONTIAC automobile shops resumed operations on Monday, November 22, after more than a week's suspension which began with that dramatic unauthorized sit-down strike. The opening of the plants, however, did not close the question or wipe out interest in the problems raised in the course of the anti-union rebellion. In fact, if anything, interest has been increased. From all sections of the country come queries to the International office of the United Automobile Workers for information about it. All questions indicate a keen appreciation of the fact that, in the Pontiac sit-down, the U. A. W. stood at the brink of destruction and was saved only by the determined stand of the majority of the Executive Board which stubbornly refused to sanction the strike.

The Issue In The Pontiac Sit Down

Involved in this sit-down in Pontiac was not the problem of whether legitimate grievances against General Motors existed; of that there appeared to be no doubt. What was at issue was the decision on how these legitimate grievances could be solved. The International insisted that, under no circumstances, would it permit any section of the organization to decide upon strike action without first utilizing to the full the existing agencies for the settlement of grievances and that the International office was that agency which must decide when and under what circumstances strike action could be resorted to. The official organ of the union put it very well when it declared, in the course of an editorial dealing with the provocations of the plant

managers:

"The fact that an employer wants us to engage in a strike ought to be sufficient reason for any union to resist being forced into a strike, which would only embarrass the union and really encourage the employer and give him an opportunity to smash and destroy the union altogether. . . . We will strike when and where we want to strike and not when and where the employer wants us to strike."

But this eminently sane advice fell on deaf ears where the Stalinist-socialist "unity" caucus was concerned. Ostensibly in favor of unity and loudly denying any desire for a general strike or unauthorized strikes, they nevertheless organized a campaign in the ranks against the policies of the International office. It is not strange, therefore, that the three danger points where wild-cat action threatened—Fisher Body in Pontiac, Fisher Body in Lansing, and Cadillac, in Detroit—leaders or supporters of the "unity" caucus stood at the helm. Hence the determination on the part of the eight members of the "unity" caucus on the International Executive Board to secure an approval of the unauthorized strike. After having fought to authorize and approve a disastrous wild-cat strike, Vice-President Wyndham Mortimer sees neither irony nor humor in his statement printed in the Daily Worker in which he declares that "there is and could be no difference of opinion in the International Executive Board on the question of unauthorized strikes."

The U.A.W. Membership Acts

Aroused to the dangers involved in the course being propagated by

the Stalinist-socialist caucus, the U. A. W. membership acted with dispatch. A membership meeting of 4,000 Chevrolet workers in Flint cheered Homer Martin's slashing attack against the "unity" caucus's irresponsible tactics; a mass meeting of Lansing workers postponed all strike votes and decided to abide by International union discipline; a record turn-out of Cadillac workers rejected all half-baked proposals and voted confidence in its bargaining committee headed by Stuart Strachan, a leading Martin supporter in Detroit; resolutions from outlying local unions began to pour in pledging loyalty and support to national union policy. Strengthened by these actions, the Executive Board went into Pontiac, defeated the "unity" caucus inside its own councils and, after a heart-to-heart-talk with the sit-downers, who had been inflamed by "unity" caucus leaders, Homer Martin won them over to his point of view and led them out of the plant.

This speedy turn of affairs caused consternation in "unity" caucus circles. The socialist wing, still speechless with amazement, has said absolutely nothing. But the Communist Party section of the "unity" caucus found no difficulty in doing a quick back-flip. In an editorial in the Daily Worker of November 23, one day after the evacuation, the Communist Party makes three points:

1. "It is also clear that the Communist Party is not in favor of these spontaneous, small strikes. They create a danger for the union."

2. "The company is looking for just such pretexts for refusing to sign a contract which will remedy
(Continued on Page 3)

Jay
LOVESTONE

"Auto Workers and
the Crisis"

DETROIT
SUNDAY, DEC. 12
2:15 P. M.
Detroit Inst. of Arts

"PINS AND NEEDLES" BIG HIT

LABOR STAGE, the workers theater of the International Ladies Garment Union, has literally startled Broadway by invading what has hitherto been considered its sacred territory—the musical show—with its production of "Pins and Needles." But Labor Stage undoubtedly is also causing murmurings and mutterings among the devotees of "proletarian art," the left-wing intellectuals who commute between Hollywood and New York, "dedicating" themselves to the cause, primarily as the latest party line envisions it.

"Pins and Needles", let it be said immediately and forthrightly, is a damned good musical, is fare for the lovers of political satire, and is the product of worker-actors. The tunes can match Tin-Pan-Alley's (at the very least) while the lyrics devastate not merely the enemies of labor but the Sallies who live in that Alley. We recommend to your chuckling and hum-

ming attention "Sing Me A Song With Social Significance", "Doing The Reactionary" and "What Good is Love"

But even if you hear the songs (they will be published, it is reported) it will only whet your appetite for the show itself. No review can really catch this reviewer's genuine amusement at the excellent jibes at the imposition of "proletarian art" on the workers, as in the skit "Economics I", the howling humor in "Four Little Angels of Peace" (the fourth is Eden, please note!) or more, his equally genuine amazement at the technical proficiency of the worker-actors, coming straight from the shops, and the finished smoothness of Harold J. Rome's music and lyrics.

Labor Stage has brought something new and good to the labor movement: humor, rhythm, and vitality. Agitprop is dead, long live Labor Stage! M. S. M.

Are We Ready For New War?

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obliged to open a merciless fire on those who stick to their revolutionary guns, for there is nothing that renegacy fears and hates so much as reminders of its own revolutionary past. It will fight us with a fury which makes its past slander and frameup campaigns against us seem mere child's play. Already, in a number of unions, its spokesmen have become the chief Red-baiters, altho they do it surreptitiously so far, as men who are unused to their roles. Already, today, they are making the C.P. program synonymous with bourgeois liberalism; the C.P. declarations on war are even now changing from those of liberal pacifism to the language of the recruiting sergeant. By the same logic with which they make their brand of "communism" synonymous with bourgeois liberalism, they are forced to try to make proletarian revolution synonymous with fascism. Spain shows, Browder's speech shows, that they do not shrink from the logic of that fact.

We have one advantage in all this. If we make the turn on time, rearm as we should, make our stand clear, far and wide, then we will win to our side that great mass of aroused and disillusioned youth upon whom the main burden of war falls and we will see our ranks swell to a gigantic force in proportion as we live up to our duty

in the months facing us now.

Our Tasks Today

This report is a step in the carrying out of our decision to open a discussion in the leading committees and the units on the theoretical problems and the practical measures involved in this turn.

The next phase will be to explain our position as fully, as carefully, as widely and as clearly as possible to the workers. For this purpose, we must make our weekly Age into a mass organ so that we can make our position more widely heard and we must speed the tempo of our recruiting in the mass organizations and the filling out of our cadres into a fighting force that will be equal to the task before us.

This is not a report which will be followed by a few brief remarks from the floor and then a summary closing of the discussion. This is a report intended to open a discussion in every unit and fraction of our organization, then in every section of the working class thruout the land. At this stage, every member of our organization has the floor.

BALTIMORE
WILL HERBERG
 Labor and the New Deal!
 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12
 7:30 P. M.
 Workers Educational Club
 522 Park Avenue
 Baltimore

C.I.O. to Press Its Fight on Hague

Boss-ridden Jersey City, under the corrupt and reactionary regime of Mayor Hague, attempted to balk the organization campaign of the Committee for Industrial Organization by arresting 13 C. I. O. union organizers, sentencing six to five-day terms and releasing the others on bail of \$1,000 each.

The seething militancy of workers in Jersey City, as elsewhere, and their support of the C. I. O., have sent the employers into a frenzy of fear and Mayor Hague made haste to carry out their dictates. The courts, too, played their usual role, upholding the sentences and bail imposed despite appeal of the C. I. O. An attempt to hold a protest mass meeting was scotched by the united employers front, when a deposit on hall was returned with the statement that "the hall was not available".

The C. I. O., which entered the campaign to break Hague's anti-labor grip, is well aware of the difficulties and will make a big fight to defeat this campaign of the courts, real-estate owners and the city administration. The organization drive will go on.

The Stalinists in the Auto Union

(Continued from Page 3)

players. With dark foreboding, he adds: "A union that pleases the employer may be able to sign contracts, it is argued (he is here giving the position of the 'unity' caucus supporters in the General Executive Board.—F.J.A.), but may not be able to hold the membership, particularly in the face of competition from other labor organizations."

The Communist Party's approval of the General Executive Board's refusal to sanction the strike, will, of course, fool no one acquainted with the facts. For here again we have a case of complete distortion of facts. The Daily Worker lies when it insists that the decision was unanimous and again we have but to quote Carl Haessler to prove it:

"It is understood," he says, "that the U.A.W. Executive Board in Pontiac, in special meeting, was almost evenly divided on whether to authorize the strike and then try to settle it or whether, as was actually done, to brand it as an out-law strike and have nothing to do with it until the men evacuated the plant."

No, the decision was not unanimous and, what's more, the C.P. members and supporters were not happy about the sudden change. Another release of the Federated Press, this time unsigned, fails to muster the synthetic enthusiasm shown by the Daily Worker. It compares the Flint sitdown with the one in Pontiac and adds sadly: "The strike ended in disillusion November 22." And Wyndham Mortimer himself has taken the thing only as a matter of discipline. He says in his statement in the Daily Worker:

"As far as the Board's decision with respect to the Pontiac strike is concerned, while many may be disappointed by this decision, it was made and must be abided by if we are to have an effective and disciplined organization."

Thus, on all points, it is seen that the Communist Party has here made a desperate attempt to cover its slimy trail. Upon the outcome of the Pontiac sit-down depended, to a large extent, the future of the U.A.W. and, to an extent also, that of the C.I.O. The Communist Party and its socialist allies did nothing to aid in this crisis—more than that, they were the prime movers in bringing it about and in driving it to the dangerous point it reached!

BROWDER HAILS SOUND SYSTEM

IN the Daily Worker of December 2, Earl Browder has a very sprightly and amusing little piece on "The Present Economic and Political Crisis." Some of his remarks, we feel, would be of special interest to our readers. The present depression, he finds, is due to a deliberate conspiracy on the part of the capitalists—to a "sit-down strike of capital", as he neatly phrases it. "It is instructive to see in respect to this question," he continues, "how the renegade groups are rushing to the defense of capital on this point. This week, Lovestone published an extended article in which he 'proves' that this recession is not the fault of the capitalists at all; they could not help it, and the communists, when we speak about the sit-down strike, are rejecting Marxian economics. . . . This is a perfect alibi for the renegades to disarm the workers in their fight against the main

enemy. . . . President Roosevelt . . . has adopted substantially a correct analysis when he declared that the underlying economic situation does not justify the present recession."

We are really greatly relieved to learn that Mr. Browder, after what must presumably have been a profound study of the present situation, in which he was undoubtedly assisted by that well-known economist, Mr. Alexander Bittleman, finds that our economic structure is fundamentally sound, as Presidents Hoover and Roosevelt have so earnestly assured us, and that this man Lovestone is to be severely reproved for attempting to undermine confidence in our industrial system. It is also good to note how emphatically Mr. Browder endorses the well-known formula of the Brookings Institution: "The trouble with capitalism is the capitalists!"

But, really, should not Karl Marx be lumped together and condemned along with Lovestone as a mere "renegade"? Was it not Marx—we seem to have read somewhere—who declared economic crises to be an inevitable feature of capitalism, generated by the inherent unsoundness of the system and therefore beyond the control of the individual capitalists? In fact, on more than one occasion, he seems to have gone so far as to ridicule the notion of a "sit-down strike of capital" creating a depression. Shouldn't this fellow Marx, too, be exposed as having written an entire book (it's called "Capital") in order to provide "a perfect alibi" for the renegades to disarm the workers in their fight against the main enemy?"

present time, this can only be a dangerous putschist slogan, if it means anything at all. Until there is a communist party which can influence and lead the majority of the working class around the basic revolutionary slogans, the conquest of power and the erection of the proletarian dictatorship is impossible. In Spain today, the majority of the working class is grouped around the C.N.T., the U.G.T. and the Socialist Party. Until the hammer blows of a developing revolutionary movement wean the anarchist workers of the C.N.T. away from their naive anti-politicalism, and wipe out reformism in the ranks of the U.G.T. and S.P., the direct struggle for power is not on the order of the day. A communist party consciously attempting to hasten this development by explaining the significance of events from a revolutionary viewpoint, pointing towards soviets as an objective, is a basic necessity. This the P.O.U.M. has been constantly trying to do. To concentrate on the slogan of soviets as an immediate practical task before the masses on the basis of their own experience have been won for it, is both shallow and dangerous.

Blue-print attitudes, moods of impatience, can bring only defeats to the Spanish working class. It becomes imperative, therefore, that the abstract revolutionism of Trotskyism be rejected. Fortunately, this will not be very difficult in view of the lack of influence of the Trotskyites in Spain. The extreme self-delusion of these self-appointed guardians of world revolution ("the sole revolutionary nucleus which exists in Spain is the Bolshevik-Leninist cadre") is only an inverted self-confession of impotence, a trait psychologically characteristic of every hardened political sect.

Trotskyism And Spain

(Continued from Page 2)

amalgam of hoped-for split-away sections from the parties of official "communism" (!), traditional reformism and anti-political anarchism. Destroy the party, the extension of whose influence is necessary if the revolutionary ferment already far developed in the S.P., U.G.T. and C.N.T., is to be carried to a point where the winning of these organizations for consistent revolutionary action becomes possible, without which result there can be no hope for the socialist revolution. This is the road outlined by Trotsky!

I cannot leave Trotsky's evaluation of the P.O.U.M. without noting the disgusting lack of principle in now calling of Nin "worthy proletarian fighter," after Nin's death, now that there is developing a wave of sympathy and solidarity with the P.O.U.M.'s revolutionary position: up to the day of his death, Trotsky never ceased denouncing Nin as a betrayer and class collaborator. So much for the P.O.U.M.

The Barcelona Conference

I choose in addition two concrete matters which serve further to illustrate the extreme sectarianism and adventurism of Trotsky. What were Trotsky's specific instructions to the Trotskyite delegation to the proposed Barcelona conference called by the P.O.U.M., which unfortunately did not come off and whose purpose was to achieve maximum international support for the Spanish revolution? Did they concern Spanish questions in the main? Hardly! Raise the Moscow trials!

"You must know what you are going to do at the conference. . . . It seems to me that the Moscow trials are the touchstone for each group that lays claim to revolutionary principles. . . . The least that you can ask at the conference is complete support for an international commission of investigation. If the majority refuses, it will be necessary to quit the conference demonstratively."

Acceptance of the specific Trotskyite proposals on the Moscow trials becomes a breaking point at a conference whose basic purpose was to support and extend the Spanish revolution. Need more be said?

The Question of Soviets

The Trotskyites have repeatedly reproached the P.O.U.M. for not trying to capture power and erect the workers state. They have raised the slogan of soviets as an immediate slogan of action. At the

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